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ADDRESS TO THE SEVENTEENTH CONVOCATION

OF

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

KATHMANDU

NEPAL

BY

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1983

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Hon'ble Pro-Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor, Distinguished Guests, Colleagues, Members of the Graduating Class, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is difficult for me to express the depth of the appreciation that Mrs. Wood and I feel for the opportunity to return once again to our "second home" and to be among our many Nepalese friends and colleagues. It is a different environment in many ways, to be sure, to which we return, when compared with the 1950's, but the people remain very much the same; they offer the same friendliness, love, understanding, and joyful outlook on life that we found in the early years. But you have also demonstrated, during the past thirty years, inherent traits that when nurtured and used have enabled you to advance Nepal to a leading "third-world" country, now able to play a significant role in world affairs.

My comments today are properly addressed to the members of the Tribhuvan University "Class of 1983." However, I am sure that these students will not mind if their family members and others listen in. I want to do three things: First, I want to recall for you some of the birth pangs of this great university. Second, I want you to look with me at certain aspects of Nepal as she stands today. Finally, let us look briefly into the future--both yours and Nepal's.

The Creation of Tribhuvan University

It seems appropriate, midway between the Silver Anniversary of the laying of the corner-stone of Tribhuvan University on June 25, 1958, and the Silver Anniversary of the signing of the University Act on May 29, 1959 by His Majesty, the late King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah Deva--which actually created this University-- it seems appropriate at this landmark convocation to remember some of the pangs of its birth.

The concept of the "university" dates back many centuries in this part of the world to some of the great institutions of the tenth and eleventh centuries. The British provided India with a more recent model

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nearly two centuries ago, which along with Tri-Chandra College, founded early in this century, was to sow the seeds for higher education in Nepal. But the modern concept of a university, specifically of a "national university for Nepal," is of comparatively recent origin. Even before the return of His late Majesty King Tribhuvan--for whom this university is named--even before his return to his rightful role of leadership in 1951, there had been considerable agitation for a national university. Succumbing to this pressure, the governments in August, 1948 appointed a committee "to organize a university." Two meetings were held, and the committee decided that the University should be residential and co-educational, have a research center, be taught in English, and include colleges in agriculture and engineering, as well as liberal arts, science, and others. Sub-committees were appointed to work on details.

Another meeting of the entire committee was held in April, 1949, and convenors were appointed to draft courses of study. The politically turbulent years which followed apparently swallowed up the committee; nothing more was heard of it.

In 1953, a National Education Planning Commission was appointed by the National Education Committee, under the Chairmanship of one of your former Vice-Chancellors, Sirdar Rudra Raj Pandey; another former Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Trailokya Nath Upraity, served as Secretary to the Commission. This Commission--of 56 distinguished citizens of Nepal--discussed, among other aspects of education, university education at great length, and the chapter on university education is the longest of all in the Commission's final report, entitled Education in Nepal. There was considerable controversy on many facets: the medium of instruction, teaching vs accrediting functions, general organization, the place of Sanskrit education, requirement of military and/or social service of students, grading and examinations--a plethora of problems and issues not unlike those that have been discussed, and are still being discussed, on thousands of university campuses throughout the world today.

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The Commission finally accepted, and recommended, (a) the concept of a broad, teaching university in Kathmandu, with some accredited colleges in the Kathmandu Valley, and others to be scattered throughout the hinterlands as needed; (b) the notion that all higher education in Nepal should be organized and coordinated under a single, non-political board or commission; (c) the pursuit of academic freedom; (d) all supported by an internally-organized controlling Senate to maintain academic standards. Existing colleges, and new ones to be founded, would be absorbed into, and become part of, the University under a chartering system; however, no college could operate in Nepal without the approval of the University.

Meanwhile, however, the College of Education was being established and developed as a model college under a contract between His Majesty's Government, the United States Operations Mission and the University of Oregon; the founding faculty of this college included : Dr. Upraity as Acting Principal, Shyam Raj Dhoj as Director of the Normal Schools, Krishna Raj Aryal, Narendra Bahadur Basnet, Rama Prasad Tandukar, Dirgha Man Shrestha, and Ram Sundar Shrestha, among others.

Also, an interim Committee on Higher Education was established to guide the development of all of the then existing colleges; the members of this committee were: Yadu Nath Khanal and Amrit Prasad Pradhan who shared the Chairmanship, and J.B.S. Burathoki.

Furthermore, during these years of development, some sixty-five future staff members of Tribhuvan University and its Colleges were being trained in the United States under the Oregon Contract.

Finally, it should be mentioned that serving as Co-Director for these University of Oregon activities on the HMG side was Kaiser Bahadur K.C., who served long and faithfully with so many others.

The actual realization of this great University, however, came from the work of the University Commission which was appointed on March 1, 1956, under the Chairmanship of Her late Majesty the Elder Queen Grand-Mother Kanti Rajya Laxmi Devi, and the Vice-Chairmanship of Her late Majesty the Younger Queen Grand-Mother Ishwari Rajya Laxmi Devi; other members of this

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Commission included: His late Royal Highness Prince Himalaya Bir Bikram Shah, His late Royal Highness Prince Basundhara Bir Bikram Shah, the then Prime Minister Tanka Prasad Acharya, the then Principal Secretary to His late Majesty King Mahendra, Hansaman Singh, the then Director of Education Sarada Prasad Upadhyaya, the then Director of Mines late Khadga Narasingh Rana, the then Principal of Darbar Inter-College late Bhairab Bahadur Pradhan, late Lakshmi Prasad Devkota, and lastly, but not least, Parasar Narayan Suwal who served as Secretary to the Commission. This Commission took up its duties seriously and met many, many long hours. It selected a site, drafted a Charter and the University Act, set up the organization of the University, and attended to the many other tasks essential to creating a new institution.

As an observer of this process, it was gratifying for me to note the almost fanatical independence of this Commission. There were various internal pressures; even more significant, were the pressures of external agencies that offered both advice and money. The Commission took polite notice of these efforts to influence the nature of the University, and then dealt with each issue and task quite independently. The Commission accepted the services of a University of Oregon Contract architect and later an Indian architect, and still later some building funds from several foreign donors. But the resulting structure of the University and the operating principles and procedures were truly cast in Nepal, for Nepal, and by Nepalese.

As a major result of this resistance to extraneous forces and the dedication of the members of this Commission to its real task, the University was able to become a bulwark for the establishment and the maintenance of Nepal's national cultural identity--a major purpose and goal for any university, but particularly important for the national university of a country with such a distinctive identity as Nepal. The rich heritance of the Nepali and Sanskrit literatures are thus being well nurtured and preserved.

The first Vice-Chancellor was Subarna Shamshere, but I should also point out that many, many other un-named but equally dedicated university leaders, staff members, and also students have kept this great tradition alive and growing down through the years. As new alumni to this University, you must do your part to continue this tradition.

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Let us now turn to Nepal today, and the role of the University in this country.

Nepal Today

In the brief time allotted to us today, we cannot begin to recount, let alone analyze, the tremendous progress that has been made in Nepal since 1950. Most of you graduates have been able to witness only a small part of this 30-year period of growth; let me, as an objective but interested observer, draw some comparisons for you between the 1950's and the 1980's.

First, it should be noted that Nepal in the early 1950's was still extremely isolated, both from the rest of the world and the various regions within Nepal from each other. This isolation was geographic, ethnic, and cultural. Now, much of this isolation has broken down: Nepal is a member of the world community; class divisions are now more economic and educational than ethnic or cultural. I have been told that the Nepalese language is now used by 90% of the population.

Second, an essential component of national growth and progress has always been political stability. In the 1950's, there was considerable experimentation in the political arena; I witnessed eight governments in six years. As a social scientist, I appreciated the opportunity to view this effort to transform a feudal autocracy into a twentieth-century democracy. But stability had to come if there was to be advancement in other areas. A certain amount of political experimentation will continue, of necessity, towards the "ideal" democracy, but you have achieved a level of continuity and stability sufficient to sustain general development and progress.

It is well-known that Nepal has long stood for "non-alignment." Now to crown this political belief, and to share your political goals on an international basis, you have declared your aspiration that Nepal shall become a "Zone of Peace" in an otherwise quite unsettled and often violent world. I note in a local newspaper that His Majesty, King Birendra, the Chancellor of this University, will be discussing this matter on his trip to the United States, perhaps this week, with President Reagan; I feel confident that he will find a very receptive

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audience. The civilized world applauds your efforts and the declarations for Peace that you have made so often in the past in the United Nations Assembly, and are now making again.

Third, in the area of economic development, you have made great strides. One index of this is the average annual per-capita income. In the 1950's, it was estimated that the average income per year for every man, woman, and child in Nepal was between $40.00 and $60.00. However, another study revealed that only $12.00 of this income was in cash. In contrast, the economists place this income today at approximately $120.00 per year. It is true that much poverty still exists in Nepal, but this increased flow of cash has brought improvements in communications and transportation, in agriculture, in industry, and in education.

Even more significantly, you have developed a national economic planning agency and appropriate planning procedures that enable you to do your own planning, largely unfettered by the political motivations of foreign donors, who, in the 1950's, offered you self-interest projects and schemes on a "take-it-or-leave-it" basis. Under those conditions, the financial aid was usually accepted, with a hodge-podge of mostly unrelated projects being substituted for true national planning.

Finally, underlying all national development and the continuation of national progress, in every country, is Education. According to the Statistics Division of the Ministry of Education, in 1951, 1.2 of every 1000 persons in the population were in school; in 1982, 120 of every 1000 persons were in school. In 1951, there were approximately 300 primary schools and about 15 high schools; now there are, under the old classification, 10,912 primary schools, 2964 middle schools, and 1031 high schools. By 1982, 70% of the primary school age children, 29% of the middle school age children, and 20% of the high school age youth were enrolled in school. In 1951, there were three colleges; today there are 65 Tribhuvan University campuses and 37 private campuses. (The actual total enrollments are: Primary Schools, 1,474,698; Middle Schools, 199,678; High Schools, 170,404; Higher Education about 60,000).

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In 1957, Nepal awarded its first degree--the only one for that year--to Rajendra Rongong, a Bachelor in Education; I recall that Narendra Mani Dixit gave the Convocation Address. Today, I am told by your Vice-Chancellor that approximately 12,000 will receive degrees. (In addition to this single degree in 1957, Patna University in India awarded about 130 degrees to Nepalese students.)

Perhaps even a more dramatic comparison may be made: In 1954, the newly established Teacher Training Center advertised for staff members, the candidates to have at least a Bachelor's degree, and hopefully an interest in becoming a teacher-trainer; the response was eleven applicants who met the degree requirements (it was estimated that there were not more than 300 college graduate in all of Nepal at that time). In 1975, my colleague and I brought a group of 37 school teachers to Nepal for a five-weeks' professional-study Seminar. I had asked several of my friends to submit a list of qualified lecturers for the group; they gave me a list of 120 highly qualified Nepalese, most of whom held advanced degrees.

But these are merely quantitative statistics. More to the point, the quality of education has also improved--perhaps not as much as some would wish, but there has been progress. There is greater emphasis on practical, job-oriented, occupational and community-centered education. Standards have been raised. There are procedures and facilities for change, and changes have been made.

It may be charged that development, in its various aspects, has not always been uniform, sometimes not even continuous. Urban areas have advanced more than rural areas, some populations more than others, some areas, such as Education more rapidly than others--but this is to be expected. The point is: there has been tremendous progress.

However, there is a truism in education that is difficult to overcome: quality and quantity are conflicting goals; one suffers as the other advances. In other words, quantitative progress in the past may have been at the expense of quality; qualitative improvement in the future may have to come at the expense of quantity.

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In spite of these advancements, there are plenty of problems left to challenge you and your generation for many years to come; you will find these in every area of development: poverty, famine and undernourishment, over-population, environment control, health, agricultural production, power supply--to mention but a few. And in my own field of Education, consider these: student wastage due to drop-out and grade repeater attrition, up to 70% "failure" on the various examinations, and over-emphasis on impractical education (impractical in both content and methodology); man-power wastage due to over-educating in some disciplines, undereducating in others; and failure to adequately plan, match, and control man-power training in terms of true needs.

I am told that there is a dire need for greater emphasis on science and technology, especially at the university level. But few disciplines begin at the higher level; proper emphasis must be made at lower levels --the primary and secondary schools--if young people are to be properly prepared for lower-level occupations requiring training in science and technology, and for admission to university training for more advanced occupations in these fields. I know from personal observation that training in science and technology has been neglected at the primary and secondary school levels; I suspect that it needs more emphasis at the university level.

I have also been told that the higher the level of education in Nepal, the higher the dissatisfaction with it (foreign education being the "highest" form)--that education tends to become more academic and theoretical, and thus less practical, as one ascends the educational ladder. It is claimed by some that Education has failed to address Nepal's problems because it is not practical, and that it may well be responsible for some of Nepal's problems today. These are severe, but challenging problems!

The solutions to these and similar problems will require continued planning and legal controls to effect the needed changes. But changes should be evolutionary, not revolutionary. Major cultural and economic changes should be made only after long and diligent study by highly qualified

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groups of long standing, and they should use task forces, surveys, experimentation, and other research tools to investigate, plan and create, try out and evaluate solutions to these problems. Educational development is a long-term and continuous process, and it requires a delicate balancing of quality and quantity.

Many of you graduates may find the career challenge you are seeking, now or later, in helping to bring about this much-needed, continuous, evolutionary process; in so doing, you will repay a large part of the investment that has been made in your education.

A Look at the Future

Now, let's look further into the future of you and your nation. Personal success can usually be enhanced by education--at least, the right kind. You are today joining the educated elite of Nepal. You, your family, your university, and your government have all contributed to a substantial investment in you. Now you face the challenge of making your education pay dividends on that investment.

First, you must repay your nation's investment by actively participating in one or more of the facets of continued development--as a teacher, village worker, agriculturist, engineer, health worker, financier, business man, or one of the myriad of other occupations requiring the level of education you have achieved today--you must establish a steady income to support yourself, a family, and your government. And you must also intelligently support--as a good citizen--your nation's many and varied activities that promote development.

Second, you must repay this University's investment in you by continuing your association with it as a loyal, supportive alumnus. The best "feedback," the best constructive criticism that a university can get--which is essential to continuous self-evaluation and improvement--is that which comes from its products, the alumni. You should faithfully accept this responsibility in exchange for the diploma which you are receiving here today.

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Third, as an individual you must acknowledge that "Today is the first day of the rest of my life"; you must abandon complacency--if you have any left at this point--in favor of an aggressive assault on the many tasks before you: earning a living, building a new family, contributing to society as a new, fullfledged member, and enjoying life in all of its ramifications; you must assume the role of an adult in that society.

I should like to close my remarks with some further advice to you graduates from one of America's less-known presidents, Calvin Coolidge, who once said, "No person was ever honored for what he received; honor has been the reward for what he gave." "The meaning of life is not to be found without toil. Freedom is not only bought with a great price; it is maintained by unremitting effort." And finally, be said, "Nothing in the world can take the place of Persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men of talent. Genius will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan 'press on' has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race."

Lastly, my own personal advice to you: Remember that if you see ten troubles coming down the road towards you, you can be sure that nine will fall in the ditch before they reach you. May you keep those "stars in your eyes" forever!

Jai Nepal, and God bless all of you.

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Education

BS University of Toledo 1931 (Social Science & Education)
MA University of Colorado 1935 (History & Education)
EdD Teachers Col., Columbia U 1937 (Curriculum Design & School Administration)

Experience

1927-35	Public School Teacher & Administrator, Ohio and Colorado
1936-38	Instructor, St. Peter's College, Jersey City, N J
1937-38	Dep. Dir., Curriculum Analysis Project, Compton's Encyclopedia
1938-39	Assoc. Prof., Sch. Adm., Alabama Polytechnic Institute
1939-74	Prof. of Education, University of Oregon
1936-53	Curriculum Consultant to 40 School Systems in 7 States
1942-45	Lt. Cdr., U.S. Navy
1953-54	Fulbright Lecturer in India--Patna, Jublpore, Baroda, Mysore
1953-59	Educ. Advisor, HMG; Chief of Educ, USOM, & Dir., University of Oregon Contract
1961	Participant, Berlin Conf. on Economics of Education
1962	Dir., UNESCO Survey of Education in Nepal
1965-66	Curriculum Dir., Tongue Job Corps Center, Astoria, OR
1966	Dir., UNESCO Survey of Education in Malawi
1968	Dir., Westinghouse/USAID Contract to Improve Leadership in Gov't. in South Vietnam (Personal visit to Nepal enroute home.)
1975	Dir., Portland State University Professional Tour to Nepal/India
1977	Personal visit to Nepal
1981	Participant, Silver Jubilee, Founding of the College of Education, Nepal
1955-present:	Co-founder & Executive Director, American Nepal Education Foundation
1974- "	Emeritus Professor of Education, University of Oregon

Writings Author/Co-author, 9 books and 11 major reports; 275 articles
Editor & founder, Curriculum Bulletin, 1939 to 1979

Family Married 1928, two children, six grandchildren, one great-grandchild

Hobbies Cabinet-making, treking, writing

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